

## "The Peace on The Horizon - 70 Years after The World War 2 in the Middle East"(1)

[\(Japanese Version\)](#)

[\(Arabic Version\)](#)

### Prologue

#### 1. Summit at Great Bitter Lake of Suez Canal



On February 14, 1945 when the victory of Allied Forces in World War II became obvious, US President Franklin D. Roosevelt met with Saudi Arabia's King Abdul Aziz bin Abdul Rahman Al-Saud (commonly known as Ibn Saud) on the US cruiser Quincy at Great Bitter Lake located in the northern part of the Suez Canal.

Just before the meeting, President Roosevelt held a three-parties talks with British Prime Minister Sir Winston Churchill and General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union Joseph Stalin at Yalta on the Crimean Peninsula from Feb 4 till 11, 1945. They discussed about unconditional surrender of Japan and world order after the World War II (Yalta talks)

President Roosevelt was scheduled to return home immediately via Malta after the Yalta talks. However, Roosevelt on board the Quincy did not head to the United States. Instead, he made Quincy headed to the Suez Canal to talk with the King of Saudi Arabia despite the risk of attack by the German submarine U-boat in the Mediterranean Sea. He spared his precious time for having dialogue with the King. It clearly showed that he himself and the United States made a point of Saudi Arabia as a important ally in the postwar Arab world.

One of the reasons that the United States making a point of Saudi Arabia was in oil resources that slept under the soil of Arabian Peninsula. At the end of the World War I, there was a famous telegram addressed to then US president Woodrow Wilson from French Prime Minister George Clemenceau who was in fight with German. Clemenceau wrote "One drop of oil was one drop of blood". It was clear that oil was valuable not only for Roosevelt but also for everyone in World War II. It was also indispensable for economic recovery after the war.

In 1930s, after World War I and before World War II, many large oil fields were discovered in Iraq and

Kuwait. It proved that the Persian Gulf is a bonanza of oil field. At last the world's largest Ghawar oil field in Saudi Arabia was discovered by the US oil company in 1948. No oil field beyond the Ghawar was found since then, and the record will not be broken in future.

The oil consumption during World War II has reached hundreds of times over that of World War I. US President was anxious that the US would consume oil at a pace more than new discovery and the additional supply. The United States should start developing the oil fields in Saudi Arabia as soon as the war ended. It was essential to keep the global hegemony of US in postwar era.

At the same time President Roosevelt had a diplomatic issue expecting the support of King Abdul Aziz. It was a problem between Jews and Arabs in Palestine. The Balfour Declaration and the Hussein-McMahon agreement, shown to Jewish and Arabs respectively during the World War I, were obviously contradict each other. This has strengthened the independence movement of both sides. Confrontation between the two sides was in deep. But President Roosevelt's policy was consistent. He supported the immigration and settlement of Jews. Roosevelt sent his signal to Abdul Aziz from time to time prior to their meeting. He asked the advice of the King about how to minimize the collision of Jews and Arabs. The answer of King Abdul Aziz was to stop Jewish immigration to Palestine.

Although complicated problems were left in the future, their dialogue itself was very friendly. King Abdul Aziz was a huge man with 1 meter 90 cm in height. He handicapped in his leg by repeated battle in the Arabian Peninsula. He had a charismatic leadership. In addition, he was honest and kept a religious life. Roosevelt felt personal familiarity to Abdul Aziz without prejudice of race and religion.

Later, Roosevelt explained this meeting as follows;

"Through discussions with the King of Saudi Arabia, I could get more content from a single meeting than many information by the State Department so far "

President Roosevelt, shortly after returning home, died at the age of 63 by heart attack on April 12, 1945 as incumbent president. It was the eve of victory of Allied Forces. The meeting between Roosevelt and Abdul Aziz, so called "West meets East", was the first significance history after World War II.

(To be continued ----)

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